



News Release

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Contacts: [Kelly Stowe](#), Communications Office
[Sharon Moysiuk](#), Communications Office

360-236-4022
360-236-4074

Razor clams harvested May 7 along WA ocean beaches need to be destroyed due to health concern

Domoic acid levels spiking at coastal beaches prompt closure

OLYMPIA — Anyone who took part in the recreational razor clam dig from coastal beaches from Long Beach north to Kalaloch on Thursday, May 7 should destroy all razor clams harvested due to high levels of the marine toxin, domoic acid.

The Washington State Department of Health recently discovered elevated levels of [domoic acid, which can cause illness](#) if there are high levels. As a result, recreational and commercial razor clam digs scheduled for this weekend have been cancelled by the [Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife](#).

As a precaution, all razor clams commercially harvested are being recalled and the department is advising anyone who recreationally harvested razor clams yesterday, May 7th are to destroy them.

“All razor clams harvested from coastal beaches on Thursday May 7th should not be eaten. Anyone who has eaten shellfish from this area and who experiences symptoms of Amnesic Shellfish Poisoning (ASP) should see a physician,” said Jerry Borchert, coordinator of the Department of Health’s Marine Biotoxin Program.

ASP can be caused by domoic acid ingested in high levels. Symptoms of ASP can include vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, dizziness, permanent short-term memory loss and a variety of other ailments. There is no antidote for ASP and cooking or freezing shellfish doesn’t destroy the toxin. Extreme cases of ASP can cause death, although there have been no known fatalities from this poisoning in Washington.

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Crab isn't included in this closure; however, the department recommends that the "crab butter" be discarded and only the crab meat eaten.

The Department of Health, in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife and coastal Tribes, will continue to monitor domoic acid levels. The areas will reopen when the levels drop.

Recreational harvesters should check for biotoxin closures by checking the [department's Shellfish Safety Map](#) or the biotoxin hotline at 1-800-562-5632. Harvesters should also look for and obey warning signs that have been posted at recreational beaches along the coast.

The [Department of Health website](#) (www.doh.wa.gov) is your source for *a healthy dose of information*. Also, [find us on Facebook](#) and [follow us on Twitter](#).

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